AMCRDA-AT

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Meeting Minutes; Acquisition Steering Committee 5-6 August 1997

1. Reference Enabling the Army Acquisition Process; Initiating the Intranet/Internet Web Based Acquisition Strategy.

2. On 5-6 August 1997, a meeting was held at the Logistics Systems Support Center (LSSC) in St. Louis, MO in furtherance of one of the action items discussed at the initial Acquisition Steering Committee meeting held at Headquarters, Army Materiel Command on 15-16 July 1997 (encl).

3. The purpose of the meeting is to finalize the above referenced document prepared by the Engineering Data Management Systems Program Management Office (EDMS PMO). Per Mr. Craterfield (Chief, Integrated Procurement Systems Office), the meeting must produce a final document that accomplishes our stated objectives. Common ground must be reached at the conclusion of this meeting so we can move forward. The goal is to provide a seamless environment for the distribution of solicitations (to include attachments and exhibits), technical data packages, and responses from industry via the internet.

4. The meeting was chaired and opened by Mr. Paul Behrens (EDMS PMO). Mr. Behrens conducted a presentation over the two day period that covered key elements of the document. The goals of the meeting were to attain:

      a. Agreement on approach
      b. Agreement on specific capabilities
      c. Agreement on how to accomplish
      d. Agreement on who
      e. Agreement to agree
            1. Not a standard system - just standards
            2. Building block for future operational efficiencies
            3. Flexibility to meet commodity and organizational requirements.

5. The key elements identified to achieve the above mentioned goals, are to have:

      a. Single face to industry.
      b. Procurement interface
      c. Technical Data interface
      d. AMC Wide Access
      e. Architecture; and,
      f. Security

6. At the beginning of the meeting all commands were requested to provide a quick overview of their web initiatives. For the most part, all of the commands are performing similar functions utilizing the web, to include posting of solicitations, Requests for Quotes (RFQs), links to FAR/DFARS, etc. Where the command web pages differ is in the technical approach, such as the software product utilized for the web process, such as Lotus Domino, Microsoft Information Server, Netscape Enterprise Server, etc. However, it is not the intent of this group to define the strategy to select one product to perform the mission or functions of our diverse organization(s). Further, the nature of this technology is such that establishing and creating functional capabilities is relatively inexpensive yet highly flexible to fulfill dynamic Commodity and Organizational requirements. The group agreed that establishing capabilities within the current site computer environment and addressing internal business process issues in the short term is paramount. As stated above, we are not attempting to design a standard system, but standards whereby each command can utilize what web technology that has been built to date.

7. In order to achieve an integrated web solution for the acquisition process it was necessary to define the requirements for the interface between the servers (procurement and technical data) to ensure interoperability. The goal is to achieve agreement on specific linking syntax between solicitation and technical data pages, to include which data elements or naming conventions will be resident at the site page versus what will be on the AMC web page. While these items were agreed to in this forum, as we move toward implementation, the elements (or naming conventions) may have to be evaluated again at a later date. These data elements or naming conventions are as follows, the [AMC] denotes data elements that will be fed to a AMC Reference Data Base from all sites to allow for AMC wide search capability:

PROCUREMENT DATA	**TECHNICAL DATA**
a. Solicitation Number [AMC]	a. Top Drawing Number
b. Amendment No.	b. Technical Data Package List (TDPL)
c. CLIN(s)	c. Order CDROM
d. FSC/NSN(s) [AMC]	d. Pointer to viewer for data posted
e. Purchase Request Number/PRON	e. Procurement Request Order Number
f. Opening/Closing Date	f. Amendment
g. POC/Phone	
h. Link to CBDNet	
i. SIC [AMC]	
j. Description [AMC]	
k. E-mail address	

All Technical Data data elements or naming conventions will be locally maintained at the site or commands web page. The Procurement Data with AMC in brackets above will be resident on the site or command web page as well as on the AMC Web Page to provide the necessary linkage for industry. As the group went through the above listing there was discussion regarding the placement of the Purchase Request No./PRON, and amendment on the pages. As mentioned above, as we move through the design and development process these elements or naming

conventions will have to be evaluated to determine if the necessary linkage can be created if the Purchase Request No./PRON or amendment is not placed on the web page.

Holly Hienz, ARDEC pointed out that a change to the FAR relieves the contracting office of notifying industry that an amendment has been issued against a solicitation when using electronic commerce. This issue was brought up in the discussion surrounding the use of amendment, and any potential notification to industry.

Issues that surfaced from this discussion included:

1. What mechanism is in place or going to be employed to delete solicitation data from the reference database maintained at AMC. This action will be worked jointly between AMC and MICOM CIC.

2. Is there going to be any type of a virtual shopping mall concept employed. Holly Hienz, ARDEC, and Donna Felix, STRICOM will work jointly on this effort.

3. It will be the commands/sites responsibility to define and maintain linkage syntax from procurement to technical data.

No timeline provided for the completion of these efforts however capabilities will be addressed as part of Prototyping operations.
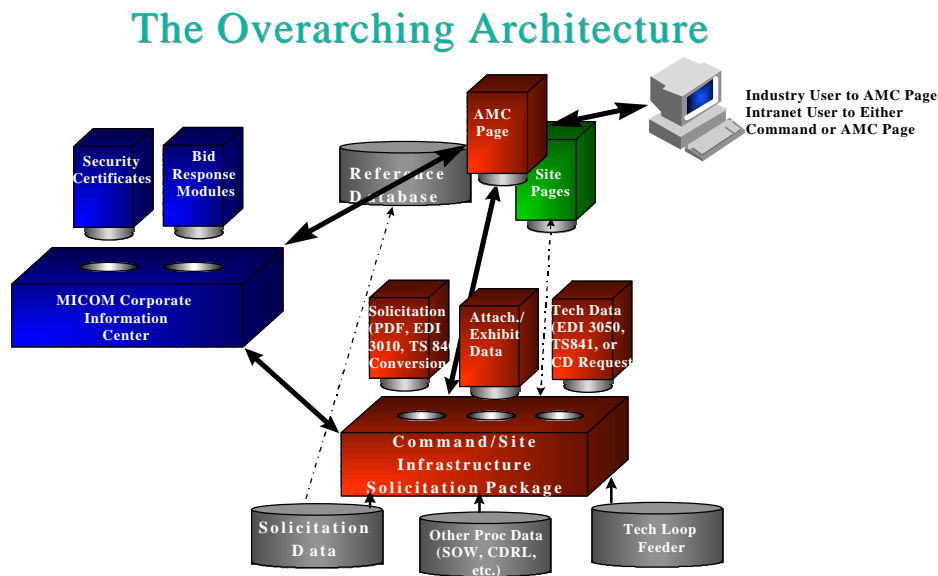
8. With the utilization of the web to distribute solicitation and technical data there was discussion surrounding the method(s) to be employed for the distribution of technical data. For the overall acquisition web effort it is anticipated that EDI will be used as the backbone for the web enabled process. Therefore, the discussions centered on defining the 841 transaction set (Technical Data). At present, the 841 is used to notify industry that technical data exists for the instant procurement, and a companion transaction set for industry to request the technical data. Whatever method is employed to make technical data available, if a reader is required by industry, then the government will make a reader available.

The Engineering Data Management FCG Chair (Mr. Gordon Ney) has taken the action to define the 841 transaction set. This will be an item for further discussion at the EDM FCG to be held the sometime in Aug 97. The EDM FCG will make this information available in a timely manner but will be a logical migration from the Compact Disk Engineering Data Exchange (CDEX) formats agreed to across all services.

Another issue associated with the distribution of the technical data arose during these discussions. Based on regulatory guidance there appears to be no standard approach as to the distribution of technical data (regardless of distribution) via the web. For instance, TACOM indicates that their security has indicated no technical data, to include Distribution A can be placed on the web.

Action Item - AMC will prepare a paper for distribution to Public Affairs, Command Counsel, and Security requesting a policy with regard to placing technical data (Distribution A on the web).

9. Mr. Behrens presented a concept for the overarching architecture to support the web enabled process. The below illustrates the architecture to be employed for this effort:

The Overarching Architecture

Security Certificates

Bid Response Modules

Reference Database

AMC Page

Site Pages

Industry User to AMC Page
Intranet User to Either Command or AMC Page

MICOM Corporate Information Center

Solicitation (PDF, EDI 3010, TS 84 Conversion)

Attach./ Exhibit Data

Tech Data (EDI 3050, TS841, or CD Request)

Command/Site Infrastructure Solicitation Package

Solicitation Data

Other Proc Data (SOW, CDRL, etc.)

Tech Loop Feeder

Concerns expressed by the attendees is that although we are looking at a web based solution, we in fact are creating a FACNET look alike architecture. Concerns were also expressed about the manner in which the responses would be passed to the command or site. Due to the sensitive nature of bid response information, specific web enabled technologies for encryption, verification, etc. will need to be employed and can become quite complex to administer. These issues will be evaluated during the prototype and agreement what specific requirements will be site responsibility vs. Centralized will be finalized.

Action items resulting from this discussion included:

1. Define contingency operations (COOP) - MICOM CIC

2. PADDS and SAACONS bid responses will be centralized (TACOM will check with regard to security issues - to be resolved approximately 2 weeks).

3. All prototype acquisition web efforts we be focused on PADDS and SAACONS - Other contract writing systems will be the responsibility of the site (ARDEC, ARL, STRICOM) to make modifications to their processes to adapt to the capabilities established for PADDS and SAACONS.

10. A small discussion was held on the Acquisition Tool Box concept. The Acquisition Tool Box concept is identified as a method for commands/sites to share initiatives that have been developed for the acquisition community. It was agreed that all commands will participate in the Tool Box concept with command/sites making tool box items available by providing the necessary linkage to the AMC Web Page. A Concept Plan will be developed by AMC, however no timeline was provided for this action.

11. Without a Functional Description of some sort it was agreed that AMC will provide a definition of phases with timelines (a mini FD of sort). This should be made available within 3 weeks. Another concern dealt with interaction during the development phase. Ms. Sherri Howard (MICOM CIC) indicated that they will work an effort to allow access to the development platform so they can receive feedback from the commands/sites. In order to facilitate a quick turn around for the prototype the Phase I functionality was discussed:

    a. PHASE I will include:

        1. Solicitation - Multiple sites (including SAACONS, if applicable)

        2. Bid response Module

        3. Technical Data

    b. Actions required to complete Phase I include:

        1. AMC Web Page - Set up with links

        2. MSC Pages - Standard data or naming conventions

        3. Technical Data - What mechanism is to be used to hook solicitation to TDP.

12. Security issues were discussed in several contexts and were separated into 3 areas for further investigation. First, technical data for information designated as Distribution Code A. There is inconsistent interpretation across AMC for the distribution of this information electronically over the internet. Second, for other data than Distribution A, web enabled electronic commerce security tools and procedures have been adopted by industry to handle the encryption and verification of users to enable electronic distribution. The EDMS Program Office is working with the AMC Military Intelligence office and the U.S. Army Land Information Warfare Activity (LIWA) to define a performance specification to outline how to configure our web servers and capabilities to ensure protection of the information. Third, bid response information will require similar protection as the technical data. This has additional implications in order to feed the procurement systems at the sites once data is received. These actions are being worked and timelines will be provided. The fall back position will be that CDROMs will have to be shipped to prospective bidders which will be requested and ordered through the web pages.

13. Additional Action Items addressed:

a. SAACONS Output Process: AMC will obtain the necessary information from Chuck Lowe (Print Output, DB Structure, In/Out bound UDFs - To be provided in 2 weeks.(AMC)

b. Agreement to have AMC Page and CBDNet linkages back to sites - To be accomplished within 5 weeks. (AMC, Commands/Sites)

c. Define syntax for CBDNet link back to sites. (TBD)

d. Determine cost of development and operations for utilizing CBDNet. A discussion was held on best approach to make all requirements available either through the CBDNet or on the AMC/Command/Site Web Page. To place all requirements, regardless of dollar value would require a CBD announcement for all procurement actions. A economic analysis will be performed to determine whether alternatives to the CBD process are in the best interest of AMC.

e. Define data available from procurement pages (look is site determined) naming conventions are standard. DONE

f. Bid response modules created and made part of tool box. Define bid response modules. PHASE I - MICOM CIC/AMC, PHASE II - TBD.

g. Define data availablefrom technical data pages (look is site determined) naming conventions are standard. DONE

h. Policy statement on Technical Data Distribution. AMC/EDMS PMO (Paul Behrens to meet with LIWA on overall security of web). AMC will pursue policy statement on distribution of technical data.

i. The Web Acquisition Strategy document will be updated to include all of the information agreed to in this meeting as well as a GANT Chart reflecting the implementation plan for this strategy as soon as possible.

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